

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
EDWARD JARVIS
(1803–1884)

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ILLUSTRATIONS

between pages 78 and 79

Map of Concord, Mass., central village as it was from 1810 to 1820,
by Edward Jarvis

Ezra Ripley

Concord town centre, 1840, by J. W. Barber

Concord in 1865

Edward Jarvis, photograph taken in 1884

Almira Hunt Jarvis, photograph taken in 1884

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To Giovanni Davico and Luigia Poncet-Davico

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people . . .

Isaiah, 26.19-20

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I dedicate these pages to my parents, whose love, hope and truth I will never forget, and to Giorgio Montalenti: in their memory.

ABBREVIATIONS

CFPL	Concord Free Public Library
BCLM	Boston Countway Library of Medicine
HUA	Harvard University Archives
HHL	Harvard Houghton Library
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles, Biomedical Library
WIHM	Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine
LHA	Louisville, Kentucky, Historical Archives.
BNF	Florence National Library
MSF	Florence History of Sciences Museum

NOTE ON THE TEXT

In this edition of *The autobiography of Edward Jarvis* the following criteria have been adopted: appropriate passages from the diaries or letters to Almira and others have been given in the footnotes; it is thus possible to see the differences between the original descriptions and the version given in the *Autobiography*. The international standard procedure recommended for transcription in critical editions has been used. To enable reference to be made to the original manuscripts, the manuscript page number is given within slashes //. Footnotes, on the other hand refer to pages or sheets in the normal way. Spelling mistakes and errors of grammar in the *Autobiography* have been corrected, and titles of books and journals italicized according to modern conventions, but quotations from the diaries and letters have not been altered. The 'List of Writings' is reproduced as Jarvis dictated it, additions are printed in square brackets.

The diaries are in Jarvis's own hand, which is often anguished to say the least. The first volume (listed as 'Autobiography') begins at Concord in February 1827, when he resolves to "put down now to ray [*sic*] what I recollect of myself actions". He goes on to recount the events of his life from his birth, on 9 January 1803, up to February 1827. The manuscript then continues as a proper diary until 30 April 1830. The second volume (listed as 'Private Journal of Edward Jarvis') takes up where the first left off, and continues till 26 June 1842. It finishes at page 191, where Jarvis writes: "I have a radical discontent in my spirit. I was not contented at Northfield from 1830 to 1832. I grew discontented in Concord during 1825 to 1832. I am not contented here. What is my difficulty? Is it within or is it outward?" At the back of this volume, on pages 333-41, there is a copy (in Edward Jarvis's handwriting) of some notes recalling his father, Francis Jarvis, written in 1839.

The two manuscript volumes form a single diary of 626 octavo pages, which was begun when Jarvis was a young man of twenty-three, and continued with various interruptions up until the age of thirty-nine.

In the notes of the *Autobiography* I use as a reference the two manuscript volumes of diaries, kept in Concord Free Public Library, and also parts of letters written by Jarvis to his wife during his journey to Britain, and to Paris, between 9 March and August 1860. They amount to a total of 105 letters, re-copied onto 981 sheets and bound in three volumes, following the same formula used for the *Autobiography*, a meticulous numbering, and indexes at the end of each column. Jarvis sometimes wrote two on the same day, and they give detailed accounts of all the events which had occurred since the previous missive. They are therefore certainly less interesting than the diaries; none the less, they give an indication of the depth of affection between husband and wife, and of the important role which Almira played in Jarvis's life.

The *Autobiography* was almost certainly dictated (judging from the type of little mistakes made in the writing) by Edward Jarvis to Almira (the handwriting appears to be hers). There is a possibility that another amanuensis could have been Jarvis's niece, or his sister, both of whom helped him in the last years of his life in the ordering of his personal papers and correspondence. This is how Jarvis himself describes matters in his introduction to 'Traditions and reminiscences of Concord' writing from Dorchester in July 1880: "these pages have been copied from my original manuscript by my wife, Mrs.

Note on the text

Almira Jarvis, my sister Mrs. Lydia G. Jarvis, my niece Miss Mary H. Davis and in very small part by myself”.

MANUSCRIPTS OF EDWARD JARVIS

‘Houses and People of Concord 1810 to 1820’, by E. J., MS given to CFPL in 1915, CFPL 764 IT 1. The MS is dedicated “to the memory of my early and beloved Rev. Ezra Ripley D.D. who for sixty-three years preached to and guided the people of Concord in the way of Godliness and was a most important agent in their social and intellectual advancement, this book is affectionately dedicated by his friend, Edward Jarvis.”

‘Concord Historic House copied by Adam Talmour’, 2 maps, from the original MS. by E. J., CFPL, 18982, and 50892 ‘Journal of a journey from Louisville to New Orleans of a visit of eight days in New Orleans and return to Louisville the April 16th to May 6th 1841’, by E. J., MS. in 8, ff. 161 (167), CFPL, safe shelf 6, item 8.

Edward Jarvis Papers, Letters, CFPL, safe shelf 6, item 7.

Edward Jarvis Papers, Letters, CFPL, safe shelf 6, item 9.

‘Mortality in Concord from 1778 to 1841’, CFPL, Jarvis, 8822 see p. 224: “the following tables, exhibiting the number of deaths between several specific ages, the number of each year, the aggregate amount of their ages, average age during the 50 years commencing January 1, 1779 and ending December 31, 1828 was compiled from records carefully kept by the Rev. Dr. Ripley”. This MS is also the continuation of Lemuel Shattuck’s work: *A history of the town of Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, from the earliest settlements to 1832 and of the adjoining towns, Bedford, Acton, Lincoln, and Carlisle, containing various notices of country and state history not before published*, by Lemuel Shattuck, member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Russell, Odiorne and Co., Concord, 1835.

‘Account of class of 1826’ by E. J., HUA, HUD 226.842, MS 123 folios.

Diary, vol. I, ‘Autobiography’, CFPL, safe shelf 6, item 7 (pp. 426, Concord February 1827—April 1830).

Diary, vol. II, ‘Private Journal’, CFPL, safe shelf 6 (pp.191 (357), April 1830—June 1842).

‘The Autobiography of Edward Jarvis’, indicated as “unidentified hand” (see above p. xl) and with 2 portraits, in AM 541, Harvard Houghton Library.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF EDWARD JARVIS
(1803–1884)

INDEX

- A
 Abbott, Jehiel, 86
 Abbott, Julian, 5, 10, 148
 Abbott, Samuel Warren, xxiv
 Adams, Charles Francis, xvi, xviii, 101
 Adams, George Washington, xxviii-xxix
 Adams, John Quincy, xviii, xxix, 63
 Adams, Nehemiah, 10
 Adams, Solomon, 69
 Albert, Prince Consort, xxix, 134-6, 146
 alcoholism, xxxiii, 50-1
 Jarvis's dissertation on connection with
 disease, 93
 see also intemperance
 Alexander (Northfield farmer whom Jarvis treats),
 32
 Allen, G. W., xxix, 119n
 Allen, Samuel C., 26, 27
 Alvoord (lawyer at Northfield, Mass.), 27
 American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Jarvis
 elected member, 112
 American Association for the Promotion of Social
 Science, 109-10, 111
American Journal of Insanity, 59n, 70, 78, 81, 83
 American Medical Association, 89
 Jarvis appointed to Committee on Vital
 Statistics and Registration, 89
 American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia,
 112
 American Statistical Association, 86, 91, 98,
 108-9, 111, 147-8
 Ames (Northfield doctor who sells practice to
 Jarvis), 31
 Amory, Thomas C., 58
 Andrew, John Albion, xvi, 78n, 109n
 Andrews, Samuel M., trial for murder, Jarvis's
 views and writings on the case, 82-3
 Antiquarian Society, Jarvis member of, 112
 Aquinas, Thomas, xxviii, 8
 army:
 Jarvis examines military hospitals, 93
 Jarvis's views on health of Union, xv, 92-3
 Arnott, Neil, xxxvi, xxxvii
 Association of Medical Superintendents of Insane
 Hospitals, 70, 77, 84
 Jarvis joins, 66
Atlantic Monthly, 92, 95
- B
 bacteria, discovery of, xxxi, xxxiii, xxxviii
 Bancroft (tutor at Harvard), 5
 Bandinel, Bulkeley, 121
 Banks, Nathaniel Prentiss, 86
 Barellai, Giuseppe, xxiv
 Bartlett, George, 21
 Bartlett, Josiah, xxi, xxii, 16, 19, 20, 33, 38
 Bassett, John Y., xxxvii
 Battelle, Dr., 143
 Bell, John, 87
 Bell, Luther Vose, 37, 56, 58, 69, 75
 Bell, Theodore Stout, 44
 Bennet (ran private asylum at Droitwich), 119
 Berg, Frederick Theodore, 142
 Bernard, Claude, xxxv
 Bigelow, Jacob:
 xxi, xxxii, xxxvi, 22, 24n, 58, 115n
 interest in botany, 29
 'On self-limited diseases', xxxvii
 Bigland, John, *A geographical and historical
 view of the world*, 4
 blacks:
 1840 census, errors in numbers of insane, xxv,
 62-4
 used as pro-slavery propaganda, xxv, 63
 see also slavery
 Blake (doctor at Northfield), xxii
 Bliss, Leonard, 52
 Bloomingdale Asylum, New York, 58
 Board of Lunacy (Scotland), 145
 Boardman, John Howe, 7, 10, 13, 14
 Bodio, Luigi, xxiv
 Boileau de Castelnau, P., 82n
 Bond, George, 37
 Boston:
 Blind Asylum, 35
 City Library, 147
 General Hospital, xxxiii
 health conditions in, xxxvii, 110
 ladies' fair, 35
 Lunatic Hospital, 56
 Jarvis fails to get superintendency of, 58-9
 Sanitary Association, 110-11
 slums, 22
 Social Science Association, 97, 98
 see also McLean Asylum; Massachusetts
Boston Medical [and Surgical] Journal, 35, 55,
 63, 70, 83, 87, 93
Boston Mercantile Journal, 35, 55
 botany, Jarvis's interest in, 7, 16, 17, 20, 21,
 29-30
 Boudin, Jean C. M. R. J., 63-4, 143
 Boutwell, George Sewall, 101
 Bowditch, Henry Ingersoll, xviii, xxxvii, 68
 Briggs, George N., 86
 Brigham, Amariah, 59
 Brigham, William, 63
 British Association for the Advancement of
 Science, 91
 British Association for the Promotion of Social
 Science, 109, 112
 British Association of Medical Superintendents
 of Insane Asylums, 112, 129, 130-1
 Broca, Paul, xxxi
 Brooke, Henry, *The fool of quality*, 3
 Brougham, Henry, 1st Baron Brougham, xvii, xxix,
 90, 132-3, 135, 136-8, 140
 Brown, Addison, 5, 10, 11, 148
 Brown, Francis Henry, 84
 Brown, T. J., 144
 Brown, Thadeus, 21
 Buckingham, Edgar, 27, 33
 Bucknill, J. C., xxxi, 82n, 131
 Bucknill, J. C. and Daniel Hack Tuke, *Manual of
 psychological medicine*, xxxi, 82n
 Buffalo Historical Society, 112
 Bullit (Louisville doctor), 44
 Burton, Warren, 97
 Butler, John Simpkins, 58, 60
 Buttrick, Mrs., 40, 41
- C
 Cabiness (student at Harvard), 5

Index

- Caldwell, Charles, xvii, xix, xxii, xxxi-xxxii
 Canguilhem, G., 60*n*
 Carlyle, Thomas, xxv
 Carter, Miss (Florence Nightingale's neice), 141
 Cassedy, J. H., xxxi, xxxv
 Caswell, Mr., 41
 Cazaucivilh, Jean-Baptiste, 82*n*
 census (1840):
 errors in, xxv, 62-4
 used as pro-slavery propaganda, xxv, 63
 Jarvis writes memorial to Congress, 63
 used to justify annexation of Texas, 63
 census (1850):
 errors in, 106-7
 Jarvis's work on, 98-101
 census (1860), Jarvis's work on, 101-5
 census (1870), Jarvis's recommendations for, 105-8
 Chadwick, Edwin, xxxvi, xxxvii, 126, 142, 145
 report on interment in towns, 85
 Chadwick, Rachel 126*n*
 Channing, Walter, 24*n*
 Channing, William Ellery, xviii, xxiv, xxviii, 8, 119
 Charcot, Jean Martin, xxxi
 Chatham, William Pitt, 1st Earl of, xxviii, 8
 Chesterfield, 4th Earl of (Philip Dormer Stanhope), *Letters to his son*, 13
 Chickering, Jesse, 99
 child mortality, Jarvis's paper on, 95
 Choate, George Cheyne Shattuck, 82
 cholera, xxxiii, xxxvii
Christian Examiner, 62, 85
 Clark, Alonzo, xxxvii
 Clark, L. R. [B.?], 41
 Clark, Sir James, 81, 142
 Clarke, James Freeman, xviii, xxiv, 48-9, 50, 55
 Clarke, Mrs. Jefferson, 41
 Cobb, P., 24*n*
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, xxv
 Combe, Andrew, 142
 Commission on Lunacy, Mass.:
 Jarvis appointed commissioner, 71
 Jarvis's *Report on Insanity and Idiocy in Massachusetts*, 71-5, 76
 Commissioners in Lunacy (England), 125, 142
Concord Gazette, 55
 Concord, Mass., xxvii
 Academy, 17, 19
 Free Public Library, xv, 148
 Jarvis's medical practice, 33-4
 Jarvis's writings on, xxv, xxvii
 life in, xxii, 17-19
 lyceum, 17
 Jarvis elected curator, 35
 public library, Jarvis on committee, 36
 school committee, 38
 Jarvis's work as member of, 34-5
 Sunday school, Jarvis's interest in, 16-17, 20, 34, 38
 town school, Jarvis employed as teacher, 15
 Unitarian church, Jarvis joins, 18-19
 Concord, New Hampshire:
 Unitarian Society, 25
 unsuitable for Jarvis to practice medicine, 25
 Conolly, John, 81, 128-30, 131, 142-3
 court cases, Jarvis as witness, 81-2
 Coxe, James, 145
 Coxe, Robert, 144-5
 Cranston (owner of woolen factory), 4
 crime:
 male and female, 90, 97-8, 138
 see also Andrews, Samuel M.; insane, criminal
 Crimean War, xxvii-xxviii, 92
 Criminal Office (England), 125
 Crouch, Christopher, 119*n*
 Crumpe, Samuel, xxx
 Curtis, Benjamin R., 27, 32, 33

 D
 Dallas, George M., 135, 136-8
 Damrell, William Shapleigh, 101
 Davenport, Miss (clerk), 73
 Davis, Charles G., 83
 De Bow, James Dunwoody Brownson, 99-101
 De Quincey, Thomas, *Confessions of an opium-eater*, xviii
 Defoe, Daniel, *Robinson Crusoe*, 3
 Delany, Martin R, 134, 135
 Denny, Mrs., 41, 49
 Devergie, Alphonse M. G., 82
 Dimock, Susan, 80*n*
 disease:
 concepts of, xxxi, 23
 theory of self-limited, xxxvi, 22
 treatment of *see* medical therapeutics
 D'Israeli, Benjamin, 139
 Dix, Dorothea Linde, xvi, xxvi, 131
 Dixon, Thomas A., 58
 Dodge, Allan, 10-11*n*
 Donne (Louisville doctor), 44
 Dorchester, Mass.:
 Conversation Club, 114-15
 Jarvis writes code of health laws for, 89
 Jarvis's private psychiatric practice, xxi, xxii, xxv, xxviii, 61, 64-66
 School Committee, Jarvis elected member, 112-13
 Downer, Samuel, 114
 Dunglison, Robley, 85
 Dwight, Louis, 37
 Dyer, Henry, 21

 E
 Earle, Pliny, 58
 economic depression (1837-42), xv, xxii, xxxvi, 40-1
 education:
 Jarvis's interest in, xxvi, 29, 34-5, 38, 46-8, 54, 68-70, 95-7
 of women as housekeepers, 96-7
 Ellston (Louisville doctor), 44
 Emerson, Ellen Tucker, xxv
 xxix*n*
 Emerson, George B., 69
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo:
 xvi, xviii, xx, xxi, xxiv-xxv, xxviii, xxix*n*, 38, 119*n*
 relationship with Jarvis, xxv
 Empson, William, xvi
 Europe, Jarvis's visit to, 115-46
 Everett, Edward, 119*n*

Index

F

Farr, Frederick, xxx
 Farr, William, xvi, xxviii, xxx, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxvii, xxxviii, 136, 138
 Fields, James Thomas, 92
 Fisher, John D., 68
 Flint, John, 24*n*
 Flint, Joshua Barker, 44
 Folsom, George, 69
 Forbes, Abner, 5
 Foster, William N., 114
 Fox, Joseph John, 141
 Franklin, Benjamin, xvii
 Freemasonry, xxi, xxxix, 36, 80*n*
 Freud, Sigmund, xxxi
 Friends' Hospital for the Insane, Frankford, 58*n*

G

Gaillard, Edwin Samuel, xxxvii
 Gall, Franz Joseph, xxxi
 Gardner, Henry Joseph, 71, 74, 92
 Garfield, James Abraham, 105-6
 Gaskell, Samuel, 125
 George IV, King of United Kingdom, 120
 Gerhard, William Wood, xxxvii
 germ theory, xxxi, xxxvi
 Goddard, Francis E., 41
 Goodwin, Hersey Bradford, 34, 36
 Goodwin, Simon S., 48
 Goodwin, William Watson, 34*n*
 Gould, Augustus A., 69
 Grant (Alderman in Boston), 58, 59
 Great Britain, 86, 116-46
 asylums, Jarvis's visits to, 116, 119, 125, 128, 131-2, 133, 145
 Birmingham, 123-4
 Jarvis visits factories, 123-4
 Board of Lunacy (Scotland), 145
 Commissioners in Lunacy (England), 125, 142
 Criminal Office, 125
 Edinburgh, 144-6
 Hanwell Asylum, 128
 Jarvis's opinion of British people, 117, 118*n*, 146
 Law Amendment Society, 140
 Liverpool, 116-17, 146
 London, 124-7, 130-42, 143-4
 Chelsea Hospital, 142
 Lord Mayor's dinner, 139
 Tower of, 130
 Zoological Garden, 125, 142
 see also London Statistical Society
 Malvern, 117-19, 120, 121, 126, 130
 Oxford, 121-3
 Poor Law Office, 125
 prisons, Jarvis's visits to, 117, 120, 141
 Public Health Act (1848), xxxvii
 schools, Jarvis's visits to, 118-19, 124*n*, 133
 Social Science Association, 141
 Society of Actuaries, 140
 Wales, 120-1
 Windsor Castle, 127-8
 Worcester,
 Jarvis visits factories, 120
 Jarvis visits workhouse, 120

Grob, Gerald N., xxviii, xxxviii, 33*n*, 64*n*
 Groce, Nahum N., 5
 Gross, Samuel David, xvii

H

Hall, M., 61
 Hallowell, Maine, unsuitable for Jarvis to practice medicine, 25-6
 Halsted, William Stewart, , xxx
 Hare, Thomas, 126
 Hartford Hospital, Jarvis fails to get superintendency of, 59-60
 Hartwell, Mr., 42
 Harvard, xvi
 College Library, 113-14
 Houghton Library, xvi, xxv, xxvi
 Jarvis's education at, xv, 5-7, 9-13, 14-15
 Medical School, xxi, 24
 Jarvis's training at, 20, 21-2, 24
 Phi Beta Kappa Society, Jarvis member of, 112
 Widener Library, 134*n*
 Hastings, George W., 141
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, xx
 Hayes, Dr., 69
 Hays, Isaac, 85
 Hemenway (merchant whom Jarvis goes to Europe with), 115-16, 117
 Hemenway, Charles, 115*n*
 Heywood, John H., 43, 46, 49, 50, 58
 Heywood, William, 36
 Hildreth (lecturer at Harvard Medical School), 22
 Hildreth, Richard, xv, xxiii, 7, 10, 17, 18, 19
 Hint, Joshua B., 24*n*
 Hoar, Samuel:
 xviii, xxii, 16, 78*n*
 Jarvis pays off debt to, 42
 Holmes, Cornelius, 82*n*-83*n*
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, xxxvii, 68
 Hosmer, Cyrus, 27, 32, 33
 Hosmer, George Washington, xv, xxii, 5, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 29, 32, 33, 42, 43, 148
 becomes minister at Northfield, Mass., 26, 27
 moves to Louisville, Kentucky, 39
 Hosmer, Hosea, 18
 Hosmer, James Kendall, xviii
 hospitals for insane:
 Jarvis prepares statistical tables for, 83
 placement of, 70, 80-1
 planning and structure, Jarvis's views on, 70, 84
 see also Boston; Great Britain, asylums; Hartford; Kentucky; McLean Asylum; Northampton; Worcester
 Howard, John C., 21
 Howe, Samuel Gridley, 55-6, 58, 59, 61, 66, 67
 Howe, Timothy Otis, 101
 Hubbard (doctor at Hallowell, Maine), 26
 Humphrey, E. P., 48
 Hunt, Almira *see* Jarvis, Almira Hunt
 Hunt, Martha, xx
 Hunt, Mary, 18, 42, 58
 Hunt, Reuben, 18

I

immigrants to USA, xviii-xix, xxxi-xxxiii, xxxvi, 94, 99-100

Index

- Irish, xxxiii, xxxvi
 health of, 94-5
 insane:
 criminal, need for separate hospitals, 78, 79
 employment of in England, 78, 116
 Jarvis's interest in working with, 37-8, 55-6, 58-60, 65-6
 see also Dorchester; Jarvis, Edward, private psychiatric practice
 moral treatment of, xv, 56, 64-5, 79, 84
 numbers of in Massachusetts, 74, 75
 insanity:
 among blacks, xxv, 62-4
 causes of, 76, 77, 87
 law in Massachusetts, 77
 Jarvis prepares code of, 77
 in males and females, 70
 and marriage, 60-1
 relation of education to, 76, 111
 Jarvis's report on, 84-5
 Report on insanity in Massachusetts by E. J., 71-5
 supposed increase in, Jarvis's report, 70
 see also insane; Jarvis, Edward, writings on insanity
 intemperance, 35, 50-1, 94
 Italy, Jarvis's interest in, xxiii-xxiv
- J**
 Jackson, James, xxi, xxv, xxviii, xxxvii, 22, 37, 24*n*, 40*n*, 56, 58, 69, 76
 James, William, 11*n*-12*n*
 Principles of psychology, xxxi
 Jarvis, Almira Hunt, xv, xix-xx, xxi, xxix, 19, 33, 41, 42-3, 49, 53, 58, 62, 68, 72, 73
 character, xix, 18, 57*n*
 death, xx
 health, 65
 helps with insane patients, 64
 marriage, 36-7
 supports Louisville Provident Society, 51-2
 Jarvis, Charles, xxviii, 3, 4, 13, 16, 19, 21
 illness and death, 7-8
 plant collection, 20
 as a teacher, 12
 Jarvis, Edward:
 Autobiography, nature of, xv-xviii, xix, xxvii-xviii
 birth, 3
 botany, interest in, 7, 9, 16, 20, 21, 29-30
 Boylston prize, 64
 childhood, xv, 3-4
 correspondence with Almira, xv, xvi, xxiii, xxviii, 79, 118*n*-119*n*, 122*n*, 124*n*-125*n*, 129*n*, 135*n*, 143*n*
 death, xx
 earnings and finances, xxi, xxii, xxvii, 12, 13, 21, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 41-3, 56, 64*n*, 75, 85, 100-1, 102-3, 104*n*, 108
 education, xv, 3-7, 9-11, 14-15, 16
 medical training, 19-22, 24
 engagement to Almira Hunt, 18
 European visit, xxiii, xxviii-xxix, 115-46
 health, 8, 13-14, 20, 60, 62, 75-6
 lack of faith in medical therapeutics, xxx, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxviii-xxxix, 22-3, 31-2, 56, 87-8
 lectures, 28-9, 34, 35, 61, 67, 69-70, 110
 library, 109, 146-8
 marriage, 36-7
 problems of advancement, xxi
 psychiatric practice, xvi, xix, xxi, xxii, xxv, xxviii, xxxii, xxxix, 37, 38, 61, 64-6
 religious faith, 9, 16
 Unitarian beliefs, xxiii, 18-19, 25, 48, 59-60, 148-9
 joins Concord Unitarian church, 18-19
 self-analysis, xx
 social background, xv, xvi, xxi, xxv, xxxv, 11
 as a teacher, 5, 7, 15-16, 19
 writings,
 xv-xvi, xxii, xxv, xxxviii, xl-xli, 9*n*, 28, 35, 53*n*, 54-5, 62, 63, 64, 67-70, 73-5, 127
 on health and vital statistics, 67-70, 85-91, 92-7
 on insanity, 55, 70, 76-78, 79, 93-5, 111
 see also Dorchester; education; insane; libraries; Louisville; Northfield; Statistical Congress; statistics; Sunday schools
 Jarvis, Francis:
 xv, xxii, xxv, 3-4, 7, 9*n*, 17, 33
 financial matters, 11-13, 21
 interest in sons' education, 13
 death, 57*n*
 Jarvis, Millicent, xxv, 3
 illness and death, 7-8, 9
 Jarvis, Nathan, 9, 42, 43, 53, 57*n*
 Jarvis, Stephen, 9, 28, 43, 53, 57*n*, 64
 Jarvis family, writings on, 3*n*
 Johannot, Mrs., 79
Journal of Education, 76
- K**
 Kay-Shuttleworth, James, xxxvi, xxxvii
 Keith, O. S., 10, 11*n*, 27, 33
 Kendall, Hannah, 18
 Kendall, Rev. Dr., 18
 Kennedy, Charles E., xxii
 Kennedy, Joseph Camp Griffith, xvi, 98-100, 101, 106
 Kentucky:
 Historical Society, 48, 52-3
 Jarvis made Librarian, 52-3
 Lunatic Hospital, Lexington, 55
 see also Louisville
 Kirkbride, Thomas Story, xv, xvi, xxxii, xxxix, 58
 Koch, Robert, xxxiii, xxxiv*n*, xxxv
 Koelliker, A., xxxiv*n*
- L**
 Langer, Carl, xxxiv*n*
 Latridge (Commissioner in Lunacy), 125, 142
Law Reporter, 77
 Lawrence, William, xxxvi
 Laycock, Thomas, 145-6
 Leach (Oxford professor), 122-3

- Lee, Thomas G., 37
 Legoyt, Alfred, xxix, xxx, 142
 Lewis Dr. (lecturer at Harvard Medical School), 22
 Lewis, D., 97
 libraries, Jarvis's interest in, 17, 36, 48, 52-3, 113-14, 146-8
 Liebig, Justus von, xxxviii
 Lincoln, Benjamin, 21, 24
 Lincoln, Levi, 71, 72, 73, 75
 Locke, John J., 43
 Lombroso, Cesare, xxxiii
 London Statistical Society, 108, 112, 125
 Jarvis dines with Council, 126-7
 Jarvis explains U.S. electoral system to, 91, 126
 Longstreet, Augustus Baldwin, 134, 135, 136-8
 Louisville, Kentucky:
 Academy of Medicine, 44
 Board of School Visitors, Jarvis as member of, 46-8
 College of Physicians, 44
 Conversation Club, 46
 District Medical Society, 44
 Jarvis's medical practice, xv, xxii, 39, 40, 58
 lawlessness, 51
 life in, 40-2, 43-53, 56-7
 Marine Hospital, Jarvis as one of physicians, 44-6
 Medical College, 43
 Medical Conversation Club, 44, 54
 medical profession in, 43
 racism, xv
 school for the blind, Jarvis a trustee, 55
 schools, 47-8
 Sunday school, charity, 49-50
 Temperance Societies, 50-1
 Unitarian congregation, 39, 48-9
 see also Kentucky
Louisville Medical Journal, 55
- M
- McLean Asylum, Boston, 55, 65, 85
 Jarvis's failure to get superintendency, xxv, 37, 39, 56
 Maestri, Pietro, xxiv
 Magendie, François, xxx
mania transitoria, 82
 Mann, Abraham G., 50
 Mann, Horace, xvi, xxvi, 54, 58, 68, 145
 correspondence with Jarvis, 56
 Mann, Mary Tyler Peabody, 56*n*
 Marc, Charles C. H. M., 82
 Mason (minister at Northfield), 32
 Mason, Mrs., 32
 Mason, Mrs. George, 28
 Massachusetts:
 Asylum for the Blind, 61
 Annual Report (1867), 85
 Jarvis appointed physician to, 66-7
 Historical Society, 53
 Jarvis elected honorary member, 112
 Horticultural Society, Jarvis elected honorary member, 112
 insanity in, report by Jarvis, xxxviii, 71-5
 Medical Society, 86, 87, 89, 91, 97
 campaign for women to become members, 80*n*
 Jarvis elected councilor, 111
 Jarvis's address to (1849), 87, 88-9
 registration of births, marriages and deaths, 91-2
 Jarvis's memorial on, 89
 Registration Report, 89
 sanitary survey of, 86-7
 School for the Idiotic and Feeble-Minded, Annual Report (1867) by Jarvis, 85
 Jarvis made secretary, 66-7
 taxation in, article by Jarvis, 91, 127
 'Vital Statistics of Massachusetts and New England' paper by Jarvis, 89
 see also Boston; Commission on Lunacy, Mass.
 Maudsley, Henry, 82*n*
 May, John J., 114
 Mead (doctor at Northfield), xxii
 medical education in England, xxxvi
 medical profession, status of in USA, xxxiv-xxxv
 medical therapeutics, Jarvis's lack of faith in, xxx, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxviii-xxxix, 22-3, 31-2, 56, 87-8
 medicine, failure of in 19th c., xxxiii-xxxiv, xxxv-xxxvi
 men, insanity in, 70
Merchants' Magazine, 63
 Miles (tutor at Harvard), 9
 Mill, John Stuart, xvii, 3*n*
 Miller, James, 14
 Milton Academy, Jarvis elected trustee, 113
 Mitchell, John Kearsley, xxxvi
 Mitchell, S. Weir, xxxvi
 Moore (student at Harvard), 11
 Moore, Harriet, 19
 Mott, Valentine, xxxvii
- N
- Napoleon III, xxii*n*
 Nazro, John G., 114
 Nevers, John, 31, 32
New England Magazine, 35
 New Orleans, Jarvis's visits to, 53-4
 New York:
 Historical Society, 112
 Jarvis's journey to, 13-14
 Newmarch, William, 91, 127, 139, 140
 Nicholas, Samuel S., 48
 Nichols, Judge, 46
 Nightingale, Florence, xvi, xxvii, xxxvii, 92, 140-1
 Non-resistant Society, 55, 57*n*
 Norfolk District Medical Society, Jarvis elected secretary, 111-12
North American Review, 77
 Northampton State Lunatic Hospital:
 Jarvis's failure to get superintendency, xxxix
 proposal for establishment of, 71, 74-5, 76
 Northfield, Mass., 26-33
 Jarvis buys Dr. Ames's practice, 31
 Jarvis's medical practice, xxii, xxxii, 26, 31-2, 33
 limitations of life in, 32
 lyceum, 28
 School Committee, Jarvis elected member, 29
 nosology, Jarvis's interest in, xxxvii, 100
 Nott, Josiah Clark, xxxvii

Index

O

opium:
 addition, xviii-xix
 imports to USA, xxx
 therapy, xxx-xxxi, xxxiii
 Ossoli, Angelo, xxiv
 Ossoli, Giovanni Angelo, xxiv
 Ossoli, Margaret Fuller, xviii, xxiv
 Otis (tutor at Harvard), 7
 Otis, Dr. (lecturer at Harvard Medical School), 22

P

Pacini, Filippo, xxiv, xxxiii, xxxviii
 discovery of neural ganglia, xxxivn
 Palfrey, John G., 69
 Palmer, Ezra, 21
 Palmerston, Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount, 138, 140
 Paris:
 142-3, 144n
 La Salpêtrière, xxxi, 143n
 Parker, Theodore, xviii, 119
 Parker, Willard, S, 10-11n, 11, 148
 Parviso (Sardinian Consul in Birmingham), xxiiin
 Pasteur, Louis, xxxiii, xxv, xxxviii
 Peabody, Andrew Preston, xviii, 62, 148
 Peabody, Elizabeth, xviii
 Peers, Benjamin O., 52
 Pelling, Margaret, xxvi, xxxviii
 Pennock, Gasper Wistar, xxxvii
 Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, 58n
 Phelps (of Boston Stereotype Foundry), 69
Philadelphia Medical Journal, 62, 63, 85, 87, 90
 phrenology, xxxi
 Pirtle, Judge, 52
 Poe, Edgar Allan, xxv
 Pomroy, William, 31
 Poor Law Office (England), 125
 Pope, William, 114
 Popkin, John, xxix
 Porcher, Francis Peyre, xxxvii
 Powell, Llewellyn, 44
Practical Physiology by E. J., 68-9
 Prentiss (Louisville editor), 54
 Prentiss (student at Harvard), 5
 Prentiss, George D., 53
 preventive medicine, Jarvis's interest in, 23-4, 35, 88
Primary Physiology by E. J., 69
Psychological Journal, 111
Punch, xxiii, 138n

Q

Quetelet, Adolphe, xvi, 142
 Quincy, Josiah, xvi, 22, 110

R

Randall, Rev. Abraham, 4
 Renton (doctor at Concord, N.H.), 25
 Richardson, Daniel Samuel, 77
 Richardson, John A., 42
 Richardson, William Adams, 77
 Rigby, Dr. (physician at Hanwell), 128

Rigginson (steward at Harvard), 12
 Ripley, Ezra, xx, xxv, 9n, 16-17, 18-19, 34, 36, 148
 Ripley, George, 119n
 Robbins (president of Milton Academy), 113
 Robertson, J. Lockhart, 133
 Robertson, William, 3n, 4
 Rogers, Lewis, 44
 Rowan, Judge, 52
 Rush, Benjamin, xvii, xxxvi
 Russell (doctor in Birmingham), 123
 Russell, John, 18
 Russell, Lord John, 139

S

La Salpêtrière *see* Paris
 Sanitary Commission, Jarvis appointed agent to examine military hospitals, 93
 sanitary conditions in towns, 97
 Sauvages, François Boissier de la Croix de, xxx
 Schweininger, Loren, xvi
 Sewall, Charles C., 77, 80
 Sewall, Lucy, 80n
 Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of, 138
 Shattuck, George Cheyne, xxxvii, 21-2, 24, 108
 Shattuck, Lemuel, xxxvii
 report on sanitary survey of Massachusetts, 86, 87
 Jarvis's letter about, 86-7
 Sherlock, James, 119
 Sherwin, Thomas, 69
 Shurtleff, Dr., 89
 Simon, John, xxxvii
 slavery:
 xxii, xxiiin, xxv, 63, 133
 Jarvis's hatred of, xxvi, 57
see also blacks
 Smith (doctor at Concord, Mass.), 33
 Smith, Increase S., 69, 114
 Smith, John A., 41
 Smith, Thomas Southwood, xxxvi, xxxvii
 Smollett, Tobias:
Peregrine Pickle, 3
Roderick Random, 3
 Snow, John, xxv, xxxvi-xxxvii, xxxvii
 Somerset, Duke of, 139
 Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, xviii
 Starobinski, Jean, xv, xxxii
 Statistical Congress, Fourth International, xxiii, 90-1, 130, 133, 134-9
 Delany incident, 136-8
 Jarvis's participation in, 90-1, 138-9
 statistics:
 Jarvis's library of, 109, 147-8
 as social criticism, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxvii
 Jarvis's interest in, xvi, xxv, xxix, xxxviii
 statistical tables for hospitals, 83
see also censuses; Jarvis, Edward, writings on health and vital statistics; London Statistical Society; Statistical Congress
 Stearns, Jonathan, 27, 33, 148
 Stedman, Charles, Harrison, 58, 59
 Stille, Alfred, xxxvii
 Stone, Daniel, 39
 Stone, Sarah, 39

Index

Sumner, Charles, xvi, 59
 Sumner, George, 59
 Sumner, Increase, 71, 73, 75
 Sunday schools, Jarvis's interest in, 16-17, 20,
 28, 34, 38, 49, 49-50
 Swan, William D., 61, 64, 69
 Sweetser, Prof., 21

T

Thaxter, Robert, 61
 Thomas, James, xvi
 Thomas, Moses, xxix
 Thoreau, Henry David:
 xxiv-xxv, xxviii, 15*n*
 relationship with Jarvis, xxvi-xxvii
 Walden, xxvii
 Thornton, John W., 63
 Train, Enoch, 59
 tuberculosis, xxii, xxxiii, 9*n*, 8
 Tufts, Capt., 41, 53
 Tuke, Daniel Hack:
 xxx, 82*n*
 Illustration of the influence of the mind upon
 the body, xxxi

U

Unitarian:
 congregations, 25, 39
 Transcendentalism, xx
 see also Jarvis, Edward, religious beliefs
 USA:
 birth rate, Jarvis's paper on effect of war on,
 98
 Bureau of Education, 95
 Civil War, xv, xxvii-xxviii, 92, 110
 education, xxxiii
 electoral system, Jarvis explains to London
 Statistical Society, 126
 immigrants, xviii-xix, xxxi-xxxiii, 99-100
 Jarvis's article on 'Immigration', 94-5
 medicine in 19th c., xxxiii
 see also medical therapeutics
 population of (1870), 105
 registration of births, marriages and deaths,
 138
 status of medical profession, xxxiv-xxxv
 supposed physical superiority of Americans,
 xxxii
 vital statistics, Jarvis's report on, 90-1
 see also censuses

V

Vater, Abraham, xxxiv
 Vermont:
 Historical Society, 112
 University of, Jarvis as a special student, 21
 Victoria, Queen of United Kingdom, 120, 127
 Visschers, Guillaume Joseph Auguste, xxx, 142

W

Wakley, Thomas, xxxvi
 Walker, Francis Amasa, 108
 Walker, Leon C., 7, 14
 Walley, Samuel H., 148
 Ware, John, 31, 61, 110
 Ware, William, 62
 Warren, Edward, xvii, 9*n*
 Warren, John Collins, xvii, xxi, xxxiii, 24*n*, 58,
 86
 Washburn (doctor at Vernon, Va.), 30
 Washington, George, xxviii, 8
 Washington Historical Society, 112
 Waterhouse, Benjamin, xxi
 Watson, Lucretia Ann, 34*n*
 Webster, Ezekiel, 29
 Webster, John White, xxi
 Webster, M., 24*n*
 Wellington, W. W., 27
 Wells, David Ames, 105
Western Messenger, 55
 Westford Academy, 5
 Wilkes, Dr. (Commissioner in Lunacy), 125
 Willard (Louisville chemist), 44
 Wilson (chief clerk of Land Office), 105
 Wilson, Charles, 93*n*
 Winfield, John, 123-4, 132
 Winslow, Forbes, 133
 Wisconsin Historical Society, 112
 women, insanity in, 70
 Wood, Horatio, 20
 Woodward, Samuel Bayard, 56, 58
 Worcester State Lunatic Hospital, 56, 61
 Annual Report (1862) by Jarvis, 78
 finances of, 79-80
 Jarvis reads to patients, 78-9
 Jarvis's work as trustee, 78-80
 Wordsworth, William, xxv
 Wyman, Morrill, 87
 Wynne, James, 90